

Employment Specialist Job Description

Overall Function: Carries out the services of the Supported Employment (SE) program by assisting clients obtain and maintain competitive employment that is consistent with their vocational goals.

Responsibilities: Engages clients and establishes trusting, collaborative relationships directed toward the goal of competitive employment in community job settings with other workers without psychiatric disabilities.

Assists clients in obtaining information about their benefits (e.g., SSI, Medicaid, etc.) and how they will be affected by employment in order for clients to make good decisions about employment opportunities. Helps clients to access benefits counseling when making changes in work hours and pay.

Assesses clients' vocational functioning on an ongoing basis utilizing background information and work experiences. Completes vocational profile for each new client with information from the client, mental health practitioners, and with permission, family members or past employers. Updates the profile with each new job experience.

With the client's permission, provides education and support to family members about work and gathers input about skills, interests, strengths of the client and ideas for support.

Discusses client's preference for disclosure of psychiatric status to employers, including possible costs and benefits and specific information to be disclosed. Provides assistance with the job search regardless of client's preferences regarding disclosure (i.e., support without employer contact when client chooses not to disclose).

Develops an individual employment plan with the client, mental health worker, other treatment team providers (for example, the VR counselor) and updates it quarterly.

Conducts job development and job search activities directed toward positions that are individualized to the interests and uniqueness of the people on his/her caseload, following the principles and procedures of SE.

Conducts at least six employer contacts each week to learn about local businesses and employer needs, to talk about specific clients who are looking for work and/or to talk about employer services offered by the SE program.

Supports clients making employer contacts about job information and/or job interviews within 30 days of program entry.

Provides individualized follow-along supports to assist clients in maintaining employment. Provides frequent face-to-face supports during the first month of a new job and at least monthly after working steadily and desired by clients.

Provides education and support to employers as agreed upon by clients, which may include negotiating job accommodations and follow-along contact with the employer.

Provides outreach services as necessary to clients when they appear to disengage from the service. Uses a variety of methods to provide outreach.

Participates in weekly meetings with mental health treatment team and communicates individually with team members between meetings in order to coordinate and integrate vocational services with mental health treatment. Employment specialist helps the team think about employment for people who haven't yet been referred to supported employment services.

Attends monthly meetings with VR counselors to discuss possible referrals and shared clients.

Spends at least 65% or more of total scheduled work hours in the community engaging clients, contacting employers for job development, and providing follow-along supports.

Provides supported education, using principles similar to SE, for clients who express interest in education to advance their employment goals.

Qualifications: Education and experience equivalent to undergraduate degree in mental health, social services, or business. Experience working with people with serious mental illness, experience providing employment services, and knowledge of the work world are preferred. Ability to work as an effective team player is essential.

Supported Employment Supervisor Job Description

Overall Function: Oversees the Supported Employment (SE) program by supervising no more than 10 employment specialists and providing administrative liaison to other coordinators within the mental health agency.

Responsibilities: Assigns each employment specialist to 1-2 mental health teams . Monitors referrals to the SE program and ensures that each specialist is assigned to work with clients from their mental health treatment team(s).

Hires, trains, and evaluates employment specialists.

Conducts weekly employment supervision to the SE employment specialist team using individual examples and following principles and procedures of SE. Oversees weekly vocational unit meetings to explore job leads, discuss individual clients, and celebrate successes.

Provides individual supervision to employment specialists and ensures that employment specialists learn the skills necessary to complete their jobs. For example, goes into the field with new employment specialists to conduct job development activities and also provides field mentoring if an employment specialist is having difficulty with job development. Also, shadows employment specialists while meeting with clients in order to help each specialist develop good client interviewing skills.

Monitors the employment specialist's role and participation on the mental health treatment teams to enhance integrated, seamless services at the delivery level. Attends a meeting for each mental health treatment team on a quarterly basis.

Acts as liaison to other department coordinators in the mental health agency. Communicates regularly with mental health supervisors to ensure that services are integrated, to problem-solve programmatic issues and to serve as a champion for employment.

Works with the local Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) office to coordinate programming issues and client services. Provides outreach to VR to offer integrated services (i.e., meetings to discuss client status, coordinates shared office space, etc.). Meets with VR supervisor at least twice annually to discuss shared client outcomes.

Arranges regular in-service training to all staff about principles and practices of evidence-based supported employment.

Tracks employment outcomes, on a monthly basis and by employment specialist, including job dates, hours worked, wages earned, and quality of job match. Reviews outcomes with employment specialists. Helps specialists to set goals for improved performance.

Participates in development of supported employment steering committee that meets regularly to oversee the implementation of supported employment.

Arranges for supported employment fidelity reviews to ensure agency is implementing the critical components of evidence-based supported employment. Assists with the development of the SE fidelity action plan, based on recommendations from the SE fidelity review report.

Meets with the executive team at least twice each year to discuss facilitators and barriers to the SE program.

Qualifications: Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or related field.
Previous experience as an employment specialist assisting clients with serious mental illness in obtaining and maintaining competitive employment is desired.
Previous supervisory experience is desired.